

VAMPi



n.18

LAU
CONWAY
TAM

UB





VAMPITM

ULTIMATRIX

PART THREE

DAVID CONWAY STORY

KEVIN LAU PENCILS

ALAN TAM INKS

JEN CHAN OF UDON COLORS

MICHAEL CONLEY LETTERS

MAUREEN MCTIGUE EDITS

WHAT HAS COME BEFORE



It all comes down to this, Vampi knows where she comes from, who (or what!) her parentage is. She's now connected to Xenocide, and the two find each other protecting the other, as only sisters would.

The Dragon Queen taunts them with the truth. But what kind of truth does it tell? More than human, but less than animal, Vampi fights to hold her life together.



Archangel still looms, telling the vampire that she was a disappointment, that the power and energy that went into creating her didn't pay off, like it did the vicious Xenocide.

But as violence only begets violence, Archangel finally meets his fate, and not at the girls' hands, but at the hands—and teeth and claws—of those others he experimented on, those he made the most vicious and the most uncontrollable.



Finding themselves safe for the first time, the new family pauses—only to have that pause shattered into a thousand pieces as Vampi's most personal past—her connection to Jacob Jones—comes crashing down around her.




WE'RE CUTTING THIS CLOSE.



THE COMPLEX'S REACTOR CORES ARE DANGEROUSLY UNSTABLE.

TOO LATE TO BRING THE SYSTEM BACK ON-LINE-- THE WHOLE PLACE IS GOING TO GO UP LIKE NAGASAKI.



WE'VE GOT LESS THAN THIRTY MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE MOPPING UP OPERATION...



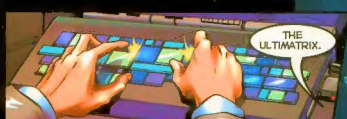
... AND SECURE THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE, MR. JONES SIR.

DON'T WORRY-- EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL.

IT'S GOING NICE AND SMOOTH -- WE'LL BE FINISHED HERE WITH TIME TO SPARE.

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS AS GOOD AS SECURE.

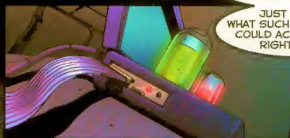
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THE
ULTIMATRIX.



THE VERY
SOURCE OF LIFE
REFINED TO ITS ESSENCE--
PURE ENERGY.



JUST IMAGINE
WHAT SUCH TECHNOLOGY
COULD ACHIEVE IN THE
RIGHT HANDS.



WE'LL
FIND OUT SOON
ENOUGH.

ONCE I'VE
UPDATED THE
LADDER'S LIQUID
SOFTWARE WITH
THE ULTIMATRIX
DATA.



ARCHANGEL
WAS A LUNATIC
UNDOUBTEDLY-- BUT
A GENIUS.

ALAS,
POOR GABRIEL--
I KNEW HIM
WELL.







IN A SENSE,
GABRIEL VERLAINE
DID DIE.

HE USED HIS
EXPERTISE IN GENETICS
TO LITERALLY REINVENT
HIMSELF.

HE WAS REBORN--
RESURRECTED-- AS
ARCHANGEL.



STILL, YOU
KNOW WHAT THEY
SAY--

-- YOU ONLY
LIVE TWICE!

ALL THIS
TIME... I THOUGHT
YOU WERE DIFFERENT.
BUT YOU WERE JUST
THE SAME AS... AS
ARCHANGEL..

WHY?
WHY DID YOU
DO IT?

WHY?

I SHOULD
HAVE THOUGHT
THAT WAS
OBVIOUS.



THE TECHNOLOGY
THAT PRODUCED THE TWO
OF YOU LED INEVITABLY TO
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
LADDER AND FINALLY THE
ULTIMATRIX.

WE'RE TALKING
ABOUT THE POWER
OVER LIFE AND
DEATH.

TO CONTROL
THAT-- THERE'S NO
PRICE TOO HIGH.

YOU'RE
CRAZY, JACOB-- JUST
LIKE ARCHANGEL
WAS.

CRAZY?

IF I COULD
SAVE HER LIFE
WOULD YOU STILL
THINK SO?





I DIDN'T SHOOT HER WITH A CONVENTIONAL BULLET. IT WAS LOADED WITH A NANOVIRUS THAT IS STEADILY BREAKING DOWN HER ENTIRE GENETIC STRUCTURE.

IT WILL DISRUPT EVERY MOLECULAR BOND--UNTIL ALL THAT REMAINS IS A PUTRID PUDDLE OF SLUDGE.



YOU SICK BASTARD!

I SHOULD'VE KILLED YOU WHEN--

BE COOL, GIRL!



THE ULTIMATRIX NOT ONLY DIAGNOSES THE PROBLEM IN A MATTER OF SECONDS BY ANALYZING A SINGLE MOLECULE OF HER BLOOD...

... IT SYNTHESIZES AND ADMINISTERS THE ANTIDOTE SIMULTANEOUSLY.

SHE'LL BE GOOD AS NEW IN NO TIME.



THE ANTIDOTE--
IT'S WORKING. SHE
WAS AS GOOD AS DEAD.
YOU... YOU BROUGHT
HER BACK.

NATURALLY.
STILL
THINK I'M
CRAZY?



YOU MADE
ME BELIEVE THIS
WAS ALL ABOUT
THE LADDER.

BUT IT WAS
THE ULTIMATRIX
YOU REALLY WANTED,
WASN'T IT?

THE LADDER
SIMPLY DECODED
THE 3 BILLION OR SO
LETTERS OF THE
HUMAN GENOME.

THE ULTIMATRIX
REPRESENTS A BREAK-
THROUGH IN GENETICS
COMPARABLE TO SPLITTING
THE HYDROGEN
ATOM...

... A SOURCE
OF POWER COMPARABLE
TO THE PROCESSES THAT
ENABLE THIS COMPLEX'S
FUSION-FISSION REACTORS
TO FUNCTION.



THE ULTIMATRIX
IS THE MEANS TO
HARNESS THE ENERGY
THAT IS THE SOURCE
OF ALL LIFE.

THE POWER TO
REMAKE CREATION--
TO REWRITE THE GENETIC
CODE OF EVERY LIVING HUMAN
BEING-- AS EASILY AS ARRANGING
THE PIECES ON A SCRABBLE
BOARD.

I COULD
MOULD MANKIND
LIKE CLAY-- AS
GOD DID.

MAYBE YOU'VE
CURED HER, BUT
YOU DID THIS
TO HER!

YOU THINK
THAT MAKES
YOU GOD?!

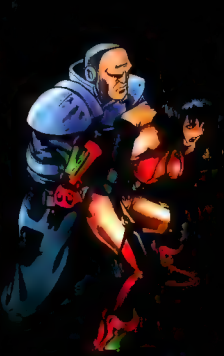


I'VE
PRACTICALLY
BROUGHT HER BACK
FROM THE DEAD,
HAVEN'T I?
YOU SAID SO
YOURSELF.

AND TO
DO AS GOD
DOES --

-- IS TO
BE AS GOD
IS.





LEAVE HER ALONE. SHE'S BEEN HURT ENOUGH ALREADY.

OH I QUITE AGREE-- SHE HAS SUFFERED ENOUGH.

AS WELL AS BEING A GENIUS, GABRIEL WAS DERANGED. GOD KNOWS WHAT DEGRADATIONS HE DEvised TO CONTROL AND EXPLOIT HER.




LIKE YOU DIDN'T CONTROL AND EXPLOIT ME, RIGHT?



EXPLOIT YOU?

OH VAMPI, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT ALL I'VE EVER DONE-- OR WANTED TO DO-- WAS HELP YOU?



YOU TRIED TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE THAT RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF YOUR FRIENDS AND YOUR OWN BURNING DESIRE TO RENOUNCE THE LIFE OF A VAMPIRE.

I USED ALL MY RESOURCES TO FIND YOU AND OFFER YOU THE CHANCE OF A CURE.

TO REEL ME IN WHEN YOU NEEDED ME, YOU MEAN.


TO USE ME TO GET THE LADDER BACK FROM ARCHANGEL.



ALL I'VE EVER WANTED TO DO IS HELP PEOPLE.


JUST AS I CURED XENOCYDE I CAN CURE YOU...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?



A SAMPLE OF
YOUR BLOOD HAS
BEEN PROCESSED BY
THE ULTIMATRIX.

IT SUCCESSFULLY
SYNTHESIZED WHAT YOU'VE
BEEN LOOKING FOR ALL
THIS TIME.



THIS IS IT:
THE CURE TO YOUR
BLOODLUST.



YOUR
QUEST IS OVER,
VAMPI.

THIS IS YOUR
GRAIL— JUST ONE SIP
AND YOUR THIRST FOR
BLOOD WILL BE A THING
OF THE PAST.

TAKE
IT-- YOU'VE
EARNED IT.



SO THIS
IS REALLY
IT?

MY "GRAIL"?
VERY POETIC,
JACOB.



TRY
POISON CHALICE
INSTEAD.

MAYBE I
COULD DRINK THAT
STUFF AND TRY TO LIVE A
NORMAL LIFE AMONG OTHER
NORMAL PEOPLE.

BUT
THERE'S JUST
ONE SNAG--



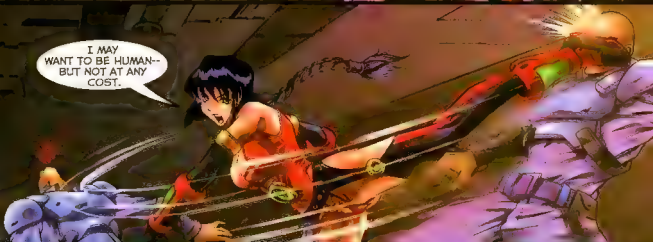
-- I
COULDN'T
LIVE WITH
MYSELF.



AND I'D
RATHER DIE THAN
HAVE IT FLOWING
IN MY VEINS



I MAY
WANT TO BE HUMAN--
BUT NOT AT ANY
COST.



YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND WHAT
YOU'RE SAYING.



THE WORLD
IS ABOUT TO
CHANGE,
VAMPI.

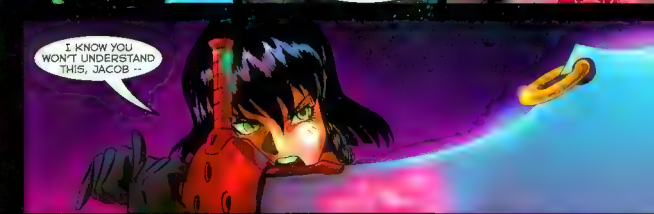
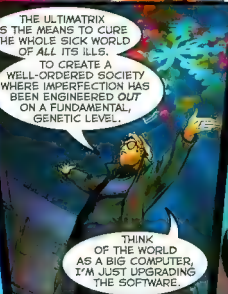
AND UNLESS
YOU CHANGE TOO
YOU'LL BE MORE
ALONE THAN...



ALONE ...?









IF YOU CONTINUE TO RESIST-- TO REJECT MY GIFT-- YOU'LL BE CONDEMNING YOURSELF TO GENETIC OBSOLESCENCE.



YOU'LL BE AS ABERRANT AND MONSTROUS AS THE XENOCYDE PROGRAM'S OTHER MISTAKES.









SO ANYONE WHO DOESN'T FIT THE BILL IS SCHEDULED FOR EXTERMINATION, RIGHT JACOB?

I FOUGHT ARCHANGEL, WHY WOULD I GO ALONG WITH YOUR CRAZY SCHEMES?

BUT THIS IS DIFFERENT.

TOTALLY DIFFERENT.



DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

I LOVE YOU, VAMPI.



LOVE?!

YOU WANT TO REPROGRAM ME AS A STEPPORD WIFE.

I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU JACOB!

BUT YOU WILL.



THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF THIS TECHNOLOGY.

THE ULTIMATRIX WILL CHANGE YOU IN WAYS YOU CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE.

ALL OF THIS-- WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE-- WILL MEAN NOTHING TO YOU.

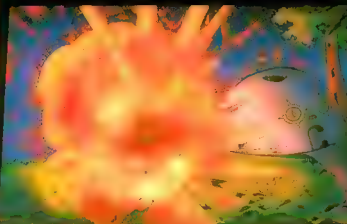
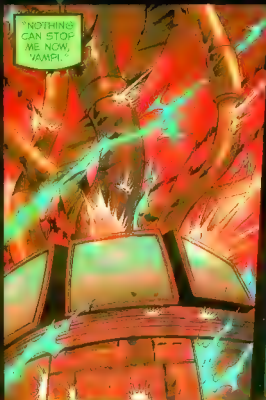


NOTHING WILL BE REAL TO ANYONE BUT THE WORLD I MADE.

YOU WON'T EVEN REMEMBER A TIME WHEN YOU DIDN'T LOVE ME.

JACOB, PLEASE.

YOU KNOW I CAN'T LET YOU DO THIS.





EVERYTHING...
YOU'VE RUINED
EVERYTHING.



YOU COULD
HAVE LIVED FOREVER
IN A PERFECT
WORLD.



BUT YOU
DON'T DESERVE
THAT-- I SEE
THAT NOW.

YOU'RE JUST
ANOTHER MONSTER LIKE
THAT DEAD THING WHOSE
GENES WE SPLICED
INTO YOUR DNA.

YOU
DESERVE
HELL.



AND I'M
GOING TO SEND
YOU...

JACOBI!



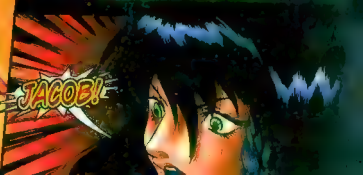
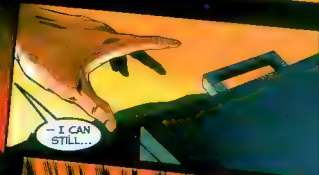
THIS IS
WHAT YOU WANT,
ISN'T IT?
THE ULTIMATRIX--
IT CAN STILL BE
YOURS...



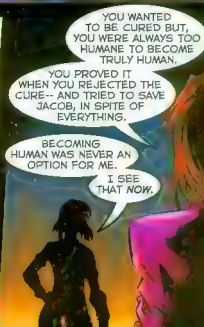
OR IT CAN
BURN DOWN THERE,
IF YOU DON'T LET
XENOCYDE GO.

HER FATE--
LIKE YOURS-- IS
INEVITABLE. JUST
GIVE IT OVER.

SURE THING,
JACOB.







ALL THE TIME
I WANTED TO BE
CURED OF WHAT I AM, I
NEVER STOPPED TO ASK
THE OBVIOUS
QUESTION.

JUST WHO--
AND WHAT--
AM I?

BUT NOW
I'M GOING TO FIND
OUT-- ONCE AND FOR ALL--
NO MATTER WHERE IT
TAKES ME.



*The Adventure
Starts Again...*

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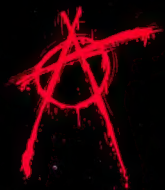
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